

LOST BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, FORGOTTEN BUT NOT LOST

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The America veteran deserves a high place of honor with the American people. Politicians cite them and hope for votes. Groups like the VFW and the American Legion advocate for votes, give dinners, hold conventions, and make aware to all of us the needs of their members.

Those who have died doing their duty should be held on the pinnacle of our thoughts and rightfully so. I'm glad they lived, that they stood up in the hour of peril that was their time like the men of Pearl Harbor.

I fondly regard the boys of World War I, the Iron Mikes, who breathed in the gas and who suffered life-long problems because of it. I recall the bonus army and how they were discovered by General MacArthur and a yet unknown officer by the name of Eisenhower. I suppose that their service was one thing but their demands another.

It is said of Korea that it was the forgotten war. General Chesty Puller, USMC, and his men were completely surrounded but his response to it was, "Hot damn. Now I can shoot in all directions." Those brave men were not defeated that day and today I remember.

Vietnam was not very popular with many groups and individuals. We lost that war and over 50,000 service members. In many circles it is still not acceptable to say anything positive about Vietnam. But this much I will say: That lack of faith caused many to go through life carrying heavy baggage called defeat. The wall in Washington, D. C., was not the cure but it helped start the healing process. I've seen it up close; it is powerful in its beauty.

Gulf War I was fought by people not blinded by the discontent of the 1960s. Saddam Hussein's forces were ejected from Kuwait and defeated. America and her coalition partners were successful. To borrow a line, "Our long, national nightmare was over." We could win if allowed to.

Fighting goes on today with the war on terror. I hope our current crop of service men and women will not be hindered in their pursuit of victory.

Me? I am a veteran, a former U. S. Marine who served honorably. Today though because of my status as a convicted felon, I feel lost behind the walls of this institution. But because the prison officials know exactly where I am at all times, I am not lost.